

# Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

## Thanet & East Kent Insider

27<sup>th</sup> March 2010

### 1. Dreamland Has Woken Up

Last Wednesday, the Thanet & East Kent hosted a business breakfast at the Fayrency Hotel entitled "Dreamland Wakes Up". Chamber members enjoyed an animated networking session and a cooked English breakfast served at table before the Chamber Chief Executive introduced to a full house the main speaker, Jonathan Bryant, Project Director. Any lingering doubts about the viability of the world's first Heritage Amusement Park were quickly put to rest as Jonathan outlined the funding received to date and the rigorous business plan being formulated to ensure that the venue will be able to generate the revenue to meet its future running costs. Tracing the origins of Dreamland to a restaurant and dance hall which opened in 1863, Jonathan gave a lively account of the colourful owners to date who have included 'Lord' George Sanger, John Henry Iles, Billy Butlin, the Benbom Brothers and local entrepreneur, Jimmy Godden. Jonathan paid a warm tribute to the Chairman and founder of the Dreamland Trust, Nick Laister, "He knows more about seaside amusement parks than anyone else in the UK" and confirmed that a full team will be in place shortly to ensure an opening in spring 2012.

### 2. What Can Dreamland Do For Us?

Not much if you live in the Shetland Isles, but, an article in The Times on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2003 noted, "One-fifth of all visitors to Thanet come for Dreamland". The decline in trade in Margate High Street owes much to the closure of Dreamland later that year. Margate may currently host the largest number of empty shops in the country and the end of Margate Harbour Arm may now be an unsightly building site, but the opening of the Turner Contemporary Gallery next year and the new Dreamland around twelve months later is going to bring serious trade to Margate retailers. There is no doubt that investors who have ignored Thanet's coastal towns in the past are now showing a lively interest in the still relatively modest property prices. Suddenly the realisation that that cramped studio flat in Kensington could fund an office block in Margate and still leave enough left over for holiday flat and a lifetime membership of the local Golf Club does not look so dumb. As one local developer said in a telephone call to the Chamber, "There are a lot of personalised number plates driving around Margate at the weekends."

### 3. Will the new Dreamland be like the old one?

The simple answer is 'No'. The new amusement park will cover around half of the Dreamland site, the other half is scheduled for private sector development. The scenic railway is one of the prized treasures and will be restored to operations. The Dreamland Trust has already acquired many of the former attractions and has recently purchased a big wheel. Jonathan welcomes new ideas but he is keen for the new Dreamland to be attractive to families and tourists of all ages and not to be characterized as a museum of past attractions. Key to the right creative dynamism will be the design, colour schemes, concessions and catering available on site. Above all, Jonathan wants to ensure that "all visitors have a fun day out". In questions afterwards, amusement was the order of the day when Jonathan said that he did not think a McDonald's outlet would be appropriate for the site. The next question came from Paul Crocker, manager of five McDonald's restaurants in Kent and a raging success at all of them. Chamber member Paul has more reason than most to complain. In fact, like all retailers present, Paul is delighted at the resurgence of Margate's premier tourist venue and is probably already ordering an increase in supplies in anticipation of increased business. Given Paul's long-standing support to the community and Jonathan's keen interest in securing a sound commercial model, the Thanet & East Kent Insider suspects that cooperation is not impossible. After all, McDonald's UK describes Paul as one of its most successful franchisees, "He does this by getting out into the community, and seizing every opportunity there is to sponsor events and distribute vouchers so that people have an incentive to visit." See <http://www.mcdonalds.co.uk/about-us/franchise/case-study.shtml>. Well, Jonathan did ask for ideas.

### 4. Calling Hotels & Restaurants

Following the success of the previous Thanet & East Kent Chamber Forum meetings on Property, IT, Consultants, Grants and Training, the Chamber Hotels & Restaurants Forum will take place on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2010 at 1500 hrs at the Chamber HQ at the Kent Innovation Centre, Broadstairs. The forum will be an informal gathering of like-minded professionals interested in sharing best practice and promoting business-to-business exchanges. Beginning with a short presentation on measures to boost income and reduce costs, delegates will be encouraged to promote business-to-business exchanges and find useful links to support their sales and marketing campaigns. Of interest to anyone with a management responsibility in the hospitality sector, the forum is open to registered members of the Thanet & East Kent Chamber and their associates. There is a nominal charge of £5.00 for Chamber members and £15.00 for non-members payable on arrival which covers room hire, tea, coffee, biscuits and administration. To register, please email [manager@tekc.co.uk](mailto:manager@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Chamber Hotel & Restaurants Form".

## 5. Easter By The Sea

The Thanet Coast Project is organizing a series of Easter events along the East Kent coast. These include the celebrated Roc Dock Walk from Kingsgate at 1100 hrs on Easter Monday, Surfing Lessons, Easter Egg Hunts, Storytelling Walks and Clean Up initiatives when children can get themselves dirty and parents are not allowed to complain. All the aforementioned are free. At cost is the Sea Safaris Easter Special for just £12.00; landlubbers are taken by boat to the Kent's largest National Nature Reserve at Sandwich and Pegwell Bay with a good chance of seeing seals and local wildlife. A great programme for all the family. For details, contact Tony, Suzie or Rebecca at the Thanet Coast Project by telephone to 01843 577672 or 01843 577409 or by email to [thanet.coast@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:thanet.coast@thanet.gov.uk). The 5<sup>th</sup> CAMRA Easter Beer Festival will take place at the Winter Gardens, Margate CT9 1HX on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2010. Damien Clark of Monster Graphics, tel: 01843 853311, tells the Chamber that "This is already one of the largest events of it's kind in the South of England and attracts several thousand visitors to the venue, many of whom come from outside the area and generate a good deal of trade for local hostelrys while they are here." As this Chamber is always saying, "It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet & East Kent".

## 6. Campaign To Keep It Unique

Fresh from its brief encounter with Gary Lineker, Frank Lampard, Jenson Button Pamela Anderson, and Marco Pierre White, see the Thanet & East Kent Insider of 13<sup>th</sup> March 2010, Sandwich is already preparing itself for an influx of visitors for the world's premier golf tournament due to take place from 15<sup>th</sup> July next year. Curiously, the website "Golfing in Kent" appears to have renamed The Open Championship as The British Open. The Thanet & East Kent Insider has always considered that one of the Unique Selling Points of our championship is that it was the first and is therefore entitled to be billed without a national epithet. The same distinction is enjoyed by our stamps which uniquely in the world do not state the country of origin. Will Golfing in Kent based in Rochester be campaigning with the Post Office to redesign our stamps? We should be told. See <http://www.golfinginkent.co.uk/>

## 7. Grab The Money Before Someone Else Does

It may come as a surprise to some readers of the Thanet & East Kent Insider that Scottish bank notes are not legal tender in England. In Scotland, English bank notes are not legal tender and, curiously, neither are Scottish bank notes. This is an anomaly that does not seem to worry most people unduly. After all, legal tender has a narrow technical meaning and parties to a transaction are free to agree to accept any form of payment. A debtor cannot be sued successfully for non-payment when paying into court in legal tender, but the exact amount should be offered as there is no requirement to give change. For the technically minded and those who like going to pub quizzes and never seem to win anything, here are the legal tender amounts in England and Wales.

Bank of England notes of £50, £20, £10 and £5	Any amount
Coins of £5, £2 and £1	Any amount
50p and 20p	£10 maximum
10p and 5p	£5 maximum
2p and 1p	20p maximum

If any Chamber member is considering refusing service to a customer paying with genuine Scottish bank notes, be advised that there is probably a competitor around the corner only too willing to accept them and who is at liberty to exchange them at full value at a bank or post office. If any readers feel they have problems with excessive amounts of Scottish bank notes, the Thanet & East Kent Chamber would be pleased to relieve them of the anxiety.

## 8. The More You Practise, The Luckier You Get

If you are one of those golfers, like the editor of these columns, who has no difficulty hitting the woods, the problem is getting the ball out of them, you will appreciate the value of regular practice at Stoneless Golf Centre, tel: 01843 823133. A new clubhouse due to open in the first week of April and a new function room to follow in July are evidence of the success of Stonelees in attracting new members to the club located in Ebbsfleet Lane, Ramsgate. Suzannah and Rob Chapman are offering annual membership fees in three categories; Birdie at £460, Eagle at £500 and Albatross at £550. All of them allow playing on seven days a week on one or more of the three courses. Included in the fees are discounts on the driving range and simulator and a £25 voucher for the bar; a useful refuge where you can explain your excuses to your playing partners for spending so much time looking for your ball in the woods.

## 9. London To Paris

Rob Evans of Boys & Maughan Solicitors is planning a sponsored bike ride from London to Paris. Go for it Rob. May you have good weather and a following wind. Raising awareness of testicular and prostate cancer can only be good, especially for cyclists. We hope that the terms and conditions of his ride from London to Paris also allow him to return. If not, we are sure that he knows a good lawyer. Rob will be passing by the site of the Battle of Crécy in 1346; widely viewed as the punch up with the French that represented the final flourish of classic chivalry, we trust that when he returns, he will still be as polite and good-mannered as before. If not, we will have to say to him "On yer bike". We wish Rob all the best.

## **10. Dover Port Privatisation**

As noted in some detail in the Thanet & East Kent Insider of 6 March 2010, the Port of Dover is giving serious consideration to changing its status from a trust port to a private company. This has significant implications for the Port of Ramsgate which is under public ownership and would benefit from new capital investment. In liaison with our associates at the Dover District Chamber of Commerce, we have forwarded a submission to the Secretary of State, Lord Adonis. The three-page commentary follows extensive consultations with companies in the East Kent coastal business community. We have also discussed the substantive issues with clubs, voluntary groups, democratically elected public bodies and our own Chamber Port Advisory Group. We have encouraged detailed representations that are SMART, i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. Readers might be interested to know that the scale of the development proposed requires a Harbour Revision Order that is decided by the Secretary of State and not the local planning authority. Thus we have an obligation to give particular attention to the infrastructure surrounding Dover and the effect on our roads and lay-bys throughout East Kent. Any interruptions in service at Dover Ferry Port produce unacceptable delays to domestic commercial vehicles on an already inadequate road network. Anyone who has had their journey interrupted through Operation Stack will also share the concern of East Kent local authorities and the Port of Dover itself that the 10,000 lorries per day that pass through Dover require adequate overnight parking facilities which currently do not exist. To receive your copy of the Chamber's final submission, email [manager@tekc.co.uk](mailto:manager@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line "Dover Privatisation Submission".

## **11. Academy FM 107.8**

With all the inward investment coming to Thanet from windfarms, the airport, the Turner Contemporary and a new Dreamland, you might think that Thanet deserves its own radio station. You are quite right and now it has got one. Academy FM will hit the airwaves with full force at 1200 hrs on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2010. The driving force behind the non-profit making community station is David Atkey, Project and Operations Director and former BBC Radio One Executive Producer. David promises "an entertaining mix of music and discussion". The Thanet & East Kent Chamber looks forward to providing the voice of business and will be taking a full part in supporting the Academy FM team both in their studios at the Marlowe Academy and in the outside broadcasts around the Isle of Thanet. Station Manager, Pete Willson, has enjoyed a stellar career at KMFM, Maidstone Radio and Invicta FM and will be bringing that local experience to bear as he hosts the 0700 – 1000 hrs Academy FM breakfast show. This will feature a guest for the "In the Armchair" interview as well as regular updates on travel, sport, local and national news. It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet and East Kent.

## **12. Easter News Break**

As last year, the Thanet & East Kent Insider will be taking an Easter break next week. We will be returning on 10 April 2010 with an additional three sponsors. We thank all correspondents for their input and agree that "It is about time you improved the lay-out". We agree and we will, but we will enjoy our Easter Eggs first.

## **13. Tiger Woods Returns**

Regular readers will know that this Chamber is promoting links with Edinburgh in preparation for the launch of the Flybe flights from Kent International Airport at Manston. Our international contacts extend across the Atlantic, as the following golfing story from Georgia shows. In preparation for the Masters Championship and his rehabilitation into the public eye, Tiger Woods allegedly asked veteran golfer Arnold Palmer to accompany him on a round at the famous Augusta National Golf Club course where the great Arnie had won four times. When Tiger's ball landed behind a 90 ft fir tree, he turned to Arnie and said, "Now what?" Arnie replied, "When this happened to me in 1964, I just blasted it over the tree and went on to win the tournament by six shots." Tiger duly took out his favourite sand iron and hit the ball as high as he possibly could. The ball hit the tree smartly with a resounding THWACK and returned to land neatly at his feet. Disappointed beyond measure, Tiger turned to Arnie and said, "Look, how on earth did you manage to clear that tree?" "Easy", said Arnie, "You see forty-six years ago that tree was only four foot high."

## **14. Our Sponsors**

The Thanet & East Kent Insider is grateful for the support and sponsorship provided by Girlings, Express By Holiday Inn and Adecco. Girlings Solicitors has been managing the managing the legal affairs of commercial and private clients for over a century. Twenty-six partners and one hundred and twenty members of staff ensure a comprehensive range of services from the local offices in Ashford, Canterbury, Folkestone, Herne Bay and Margate. Offices in France and Spain complement specialist departments for charities, individuals and companies. For details, telephone 01843 220274. Express By Holiday took on the daunting task of restoring the former Prospect Inn at Minster. The result is a spectacular hotel that combines the best of Oliver Hill's 1930s design with ultra modern facilities and technological support. Conveniently located for business guests and holiday makers in East Kent, the meeting rooms and 105 bedrooms are available at competitive prices throughout the year. For details, telephone 01843 820250. Adecco is the world's largest HR solutions company offering a comprehensive service of temporary and contract staffing, permanent recruitment, outsourcing, outplacement, career services, training and consulting. Officially designated as a 2009 British Superbrand, Adecco is represented in Thanet and Dover by its Broadstairs office, tel: 01843 609292.



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***It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet & East Kent.***

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